(c) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the Soviet Army publication "The Red Star" to the effect that Pakistan has consented to part with Gwadar for being turned into headquarters of one of the divisions of Rapid Deployment Force; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) to (d) Both USA and Pakistan have denied the existence of a secret agreement providing for the deployment of U.S. Rapid Deployment Force on Pakistani territory. However, Government continues to maintain a constant vigil on all such developments having a bearing on our Security.

Hotel accommodation for tourists

737. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total requirement of hotel room accommodation, keeping in view the present rate of tourists visiting India from abroad;

(b) what is the present availability of hotel room accommodation in the country for foreign tourists;

(c) what steps Government are taking to increase accommodation for foreign tourists; and

(d) whether any phased programme has been chalked out in this regard and if so, what are the details in this regard and the amount earmarked for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (MUFTI MOHD. SAYEED): (a) The projected total requirement of hotel room accommodation by 1990 is 59,000 rooms to cate to the targetted 2.5 million foreign tourist arrivals expected by then.

(b) There are at present about 31,000 hotel rooms of the approved category.

(c) and (d) In order to encourage investment in the hotel industry, Government has extended several incentives/concessions to the hotel industry. These include exemption from the MRTP Act in the matter of both new projects and expansion of existing hotels; income tax holiday to new hotels; higher depreciation allowance; central subsidy for construction of new hotels in specified backward areas; interest subsidy on hotel loans advanced by IFCI, Foreign Exchange Incentive Quota for overseas advertising/publicity, promotional tours, import of provisions, equipment including vehicles (upto two in a year); concessional customs duty on a number of items imported by hotels for actual use; priority on the allotment of telephone/telex connections, etc. Besides, some of the State Governments have also accorded hotels/tourism the status of an industry, which entitles hotels to such concessions/incentive as are available to other industries in the respective States.

In the public sector, the India Tourism Development Corporation is setting up a 30-room hotel at Gulmarg besides expansion of 2 hotels and conversion of one Travellers" Lodge into a hotel. It is also constructing 6 hotels as joint venture projects with the State Governments.

The Department of Tourism is setting up Yatri Niwases and Forest Lodges, in collaboration with the State Governments, to provide accommodation for budget tourists. In the Seventh Five Year Plan of the Department of Tourism there is a provision of Rs. 5.00 crores and Rs. 2.00 crores for these projects respectively.

The Seventh Five Year Plan of the India Tourism Development Corporation does not include any provision for new hotel projects.